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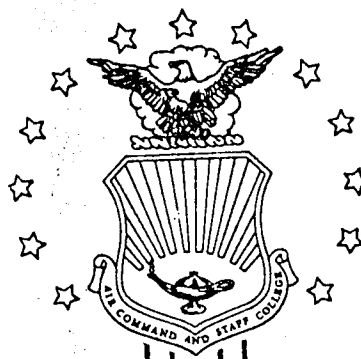
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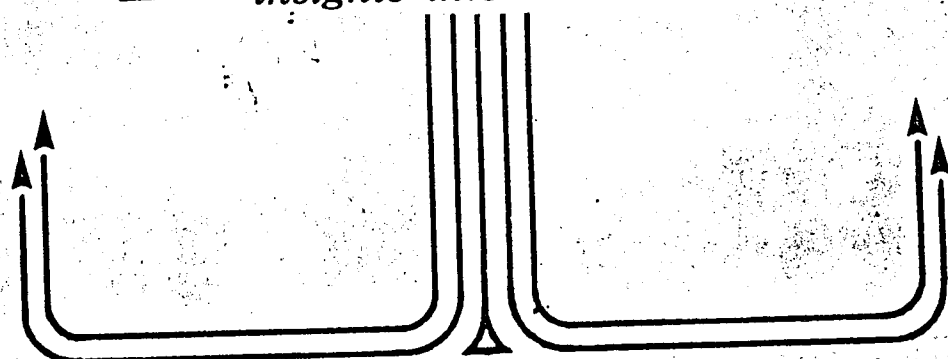
AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

STUDENT REPORT

THE ENLISTED PILOT PROGRAM IN THE
USAAF 1941-1942: WAS IT SUCCESSFUL?

MAJOR HARRY O. MAMAUX, III 84-1655

"insights into tomorrow"





REPORT NUMBER 84-1655

TITLE THE ENLISTED PILOT PROGRAM IN THE USAAF 1941-1942:
WAS IT SUCCESSFUL?

AUTHOR(S) MAJOR HARRY O. MAMAUX, III, USAF

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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) This paper reviews a unique program of pilot accession in WWII. The controversy between the need for pilots and the need for officers is discussed in light of Army traditions and Congressional action. The problems encountered with enlisted men as front line pilots are reviewed. Interviews with former enlisted pilots provide an additional perspective. The importance of this historical study and its future application is addressed.		

PREFACE

The Enlisted Pilot Program in the U.S. Army Air Forces lasted less than two years. It began with the signing of the Aviation Student Act (Public Law 99) on 4 June 1941 and the first class, Class 42-C beginning on 23 August 1941. The end was signaled with the passage of the Flight Officer Act (Public Law 658) on 8 July 1942 and the program terminated with the graduation of Class 42-J on 10 November 1942. During the period 23 August 1941 to 10 November 1942 over 2580 enlisted men were trained in grade and graduated as Staff Sergeant Pilots. This training tested a controversy that had raged in the Army and Congress for almost thirty years: the need for pilots versus the need for officers.

The training of enlisted pilots began in the spring of 1912 but was continually attacked by traditionalists who felt only officers and college educated individuals possessed adequate mental abilities to fly. Impending war and critical pilot shortages brought Congressional action during 1940, directing the Army to tap this additional source of pilots. Army and Congressional action was swift but serious problems emerged.

While the enlisted pilots were highly motivated, capable, and successful, attempts at matching enlisted and officer pilots to the same duties created serious morale problems. Key to the cancellation of the program was the question of equal work for equal pay. Termination of the Enlisted Pilot Program in 1942 did not eliminate all enlisted pilots.

The program trained fully qualified universal pilots who wore the same pilot wings as officers. The Air Corps continued to train enlisted men as limited duty pilots such as Glider or "G" pilots and Liaison or "L" pilots. These pilots should not be confused with the regular enlisted pilots. Their training was less, their duties limited, and their pilot wings contained the "G" or "L" of their specialty. In the eyes of the 2580 enlisted pilots these others were not pilots.

Many of the enlisted pilots continued in the military, were commissioned, and retired as senior officers. The program clearly provided a new source of pilots and tested one's need of college education to fly a plane. Our ability to adequately man combat aircraft in the next century may require a look at this unique program of WWIT.

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I would like to extend my thanks to Dr. James C. Hasdorff of the Oral History Department (USAFHRC/OH) for his assistance in directing me in the proper methods of obtaining the oral histories of four former enlisted pilots. I must also express my appreciation to the following individuals who gave freely of their time and experiences to assist me and record those years that they so fondly remember and that shaped their lives and our nation's history:

Edgar A. Armogast, Lt. Col., USAF (Ret)	Class 42-D
James E. Beck, Major, USAF (Ret)	Class 42-H
Bernard Makowski, Lt. Col, USAF (Ret)	Class 42-J
Walter F. Mayer, CW01, USAF (Ret)	Class 42-J

Their recollections will be transcribed and become a permanent part of the USAF Historical Research Center. But most importantly, I thank my wife for her patience and typing of this study.

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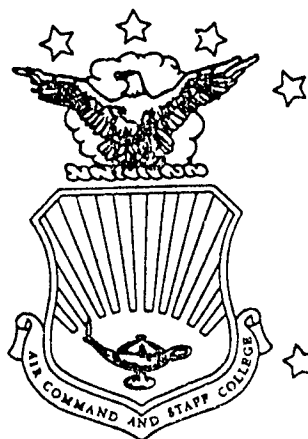
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Part of our College mission is distribution of the students' problem solving products to DoD sponsors and other interested agencies to enhance insight into contemporary, defense related issues. While the College has accepted this product as meeting academic requirements for graduation, the views and opinions expressed or implied are solely those of the author and should not be construed as carrying official sanction.

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REPORT NUMBER 84-1655

AUTHOR(S) MAJOR HARRY O. MAMAUX, III, USAF

TITLE THE ENLISTED PILOT PROGRAM IN THE USAAF 1941-1942:
WAS IT SUCCESSFUL?

I. Purpose: To review a little known and unique pilot accession program of the U.S. Army Air Forces. This program provided a new source of pilots during a period of critical shortage in the pilot expansion program of early WWII. The controversy over the need for pilots and the need for college educated officers created factions within the Army and Congress. The implementation of the program reveals its success and inherent problems. Taped interviews with four enlisted pilots gives additional information on this almost forgotten program.

II. Conclusions: The program was extremely successful in providing a new source of highly motivated pilots. Many of these individuals continued their military careers and were later commissioned. The need for a college education is mandatory for a commissioned officer but is of questionable value solely to be a pilot.

III. Recommendations: The lessons learned in the enlisted pilot program should not be forgotten. Increased college expenses, decreasing availability of manpower, and a continued need for qualified pilots may produce a future use for non-

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college educated limited duty officers or enlisted pilots. Knowledge of this program may aid in guiding Air Force personnel policies in the next century.

At present there is a lot of criticism over the fact that we retain a two year college requirement for flight training as a pilot. He believed that publicity pertaining to the training of enlisted men as pilots will offset action to reduce the qualifications for pilot training as a Reserve Officer (12:69).

strangely enough, a "leak" occurred soon after General Brett's memorandum. On 6 April 1941 the New York Times reported that the Army Air Corps and the Navy were preparing to let down the barriers to enlisted men as pilots to produce an adequate number of pilots for the new aircraft being produced. The article further stated:

Some officials believe that only by following the example of Germany and Great Britain in making pilots of enlisted men can the Army attain its objectives of 30,000 fliers a year. The prospective change in policy by the Army Air Corps may be put into effect in the summer (12:70).

The groundwork had been laid for the Enlisted Pilot Program; only the formalities of the democratic process stood in the way.

On 22 April 1941 Senator Robert R. Reynolds of North Carolina introduced Senate Bill S. 1371 to authorize the training of Army enlisted men as aviation students (12:71). The bill was passed by the Senate on 15 May; referred to the House Committee on Military Affairs on 19 May; passed by the House without amendment or discussion on 21 May; and signed into law by the President on 4 June 1941. The bill became Public Law 99, the Aviation Student Act. It provided for training in grade, as pilots, enlisted men of the Regular Army on active duty status. They were to be known as aviation students rather than aviation cadets (11:72). On 1 August 1941 AR 615-150 was published stating the requirements for training "young men who are physically and temperamentally qualified as combat pilots but lack the basic educational level deemed essential to a commissioned officer" and that graduates would become "Staff Sergeant Pilots" (12:74). The way was now open for the training of enlisted pilots.

CONCLUSIONS

Controversy over enlisted pilots remained essentially unchanged even after the passage of the Aviation Student Act. The educational requirement remained critical to the Army. Education served as a discriminator and separated the better qualified individuals to enter pilot training. Also education provided more versatile individuals who could perform other duties when their ability to fly was lost. This theory ran contrary to that for enlisted personnel, who were trained in a

We just wanted to fly" (18:-, 21:-).

Their high morale and desire to become pilots gave them a motivation others did not have and contributed to their success. A 17 July 1943 HQ AAF Training Command Psychological Statistical report clearly showed that they had the "right stuff". It concluded that the strength of the desire to become a pilot was very significant in successful completion. It further pointed out the largest percentage of men graduated was among younger men, men who wanted to be pilots, and oddly enough, men with less education. Individuals with 8th grade or lower education had the highest percentage of graduates of those entering (9:7). This may indicate a higher level of co-ordination and physical ability which was key to the operation of these basic, unsophisticated aircraft. It also pointed out that the training itself had adequate discrimination or elimination and that two years of college education was not needed as an eliminating factor from pilot training. Other factors were in their favor.

The fact that these enlisted pilots had been in the Army and had adjusted to military life put them at ease in the military environment. They were also better disciplined, which contributed to their successful completion of pilot training. In a 30 October 1942 letter from Major General Ralph Royce, Commander, Southeast Army Air Forces Training Center, Maxwell Field, Alabama, subject: Efficiency of Graduates, he stated:

Enlisted pilots are much better disciplined than commissioned officers. It is a mistake to mingle the two groups at Operational Training Units (OTU's) and fighter units.

CONCLUSIONS

The Enlisted Pilot Training Program appeared to be well administered by the Army. It provided a new source of qualified candidates highly motivated in their desire to fly. It was successful with the low elimination rate and provided the Army with new combat pilots. It had provided the additional pilots the Army needed at the beginning of WWII.

1941 General Arnold directed that a study be made of troop carrying and cargo gliders. The results, presented on 28 May 1941, stated that glider training would be of little value to powered pilot training and that only an experimental view should be taken.

It was the successful invasion of Crete by Glider borne German forces in May 1941 that spurred the Army to establish and enter a formal glider program which began on 19 February 1942. The course was to be sixteen weeks and 130 hours of instruction with all students graduating as Staff Sergeant Glider Pilots. In 1943 with an excess of glider pilots these personnel were encouraged to apply for aviation cadet training and become pilots. The glider program officially ended on 15 January 1945.

LIAISON PILOTS

Possibly the best known of all enlisted pilots were the Liaison Pilots. These individuals completed a six week school with 40 hours of flying time and 194 hours of ground school. They were graduated as Staff Sergeant Liaison Pilots.

These individuals were limited to the L aircraft of the L-4 or L-5 type. These aircraft were 60 horse power single engine, four passenger, high wing planes similar to small private planes like the CESSNA. The duties of Liaison Pilots were in photo reconnaissance, courier duty, air rescue, and artillery observation. In addition to flying, these individuals possessed one or more other military specialties such as mechanics or photography. The majority of these candidates were eliminees from other training with up to 60 hours of flying time.

The Liaison Pilots operated in all theaters of combat and continued to be trained and fly until September 1945. The Army trained 4333 "L" pilots during the period September 1942 - September 1945.

SUMMARY

These pilot areas utilized enlisted personnel in distinct and separate missions from other pilots. In this respect some of the morale problems faced by the regular enlisted pilots who trained and flew with officers were erased. Additionally the "L" and "C" pilots were distinctly different. This "segregation" seemed to more fit the needs of the Army as these programs continued well past the end of the Enlisted Pilot Program.

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Chapter Eight

CONCLUSIONS

The Enlisted Pilot Program was a successful and important part of the Army Air Forces. It provided an untapped source of highly motivated pilot students. As a result, over 2580 men were graduated as Staff Sergeant Pilots between 23 August 1941 and 10 November 1942. This group of men, although only one per cent of the 193,440 pilots trained during WWII, tested the need for a college education to fly a plane.

The Aviation Student Act deleted the requirement for two years of college. The Army, however, would not commission officers without the formal education. This test proved that college education was not required to be a successful pilot. The success of the enlisted pilots who remained on active duty demonstrates this fact.

Of the enlisted pilots of 1941-1942 many rose to senior rank. Seven became General officers, of whom the best known is Brigadier General "Chuck" Yaeger.

Little is known of this program because of its limited scope and duration; however, its importance should be reviewed. This source of pilots for the future, as demographic changes reduce manpower availability, must be considered. It has been tested and proven and will work again.

The program's success was not a result of actions by the U.S. Army. The success lay with the motivation and spirit of the enlisted men it trained. These men made the program. They had been given an opportunity of a lifetime, to fly. They wanted to fulfill their dreams and be a success. They wouldn't - and didn't - fail.

Each enlisted pilot interviewed during this project was proud to have been a part of Air Force history.

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